

Attachment C

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**OFFICE OF
THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY
COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO**

DWAIN D. WOODLEY
ASSISTANT DISTRICT ATTORNEY

**SUMMER STEPHAN
DISTRICT ATTORNEY**

May 22, 2025

Hayley Sanon
Acting Assistant Secretary for Elementary and Secondary Education
Office of Elementary and Secondary Education
U.S. Department of Education
OESEGrants@ed.gov
400 Maryland Ave. SW
Washington, DC 20202

Dear Hayley Sanon,

As the District Attorney for San Diego County, I am writing to express my strong support for the continued funding of the Mental Health Service Pathways (MHSP) initiative implemented by the San Diego County Office of Education.

The MHSP program plays a vital role in strengthening our school communities through the placement of trained social work interns in under-resourced schools. These interns provide essential mental health services including individual counseling, crisis intervention, group therapy, and prevention-based programs. As a result, students demonstrate improved behavior, stronger academic performance, and a greater sense of personal and community safety.


The sudden discontinuation of this program's federal grant funding, despite its designation as a five-year initiative, would negatively impact the well-being and safety of students across San Diego County.

As a prosecutor committed to public safety and the protection of our most vulnerable youth, I view MHSP not only as a health and education initiative but as a preventative justice measure. By supporting students' mental health and emotional resilience early on, we reduce the risk of school dropout and justice involvement. Sustaining this program is not just beneficial, it is imperative to our shared commitment to safe, thriving school environments.

I respectfully urge the Department to reconsider the decision to discontinue MHSP funding prematurely. Allowing the program to fulfill its full term will ensure continued progress in student mental health and community safety across our county.

As the elected District Attorney and a career prosecutor devoted to protecting children, I believe this service is needed for the health of our children and can contribute to keeping them out of illegal activity and the juvenile justice system by addressing their underlying mental health. Thank you for your attention to this urgent matter.

Sincerely,



SUMMER STEPHAN
San Diego County District Attorney



San Pasqual

- Union School District -

15305 Rockwood Road, Escondido, CA 92027

(760) 745-4931

www.sanpasqualunion.net

May 15, 2025

Hayley Sanon

Acting Assistant Secretary for Elementary and Secondary Education

Office of Elementary and Secondary Education

U.S. Department of Education

OESEGrants@ed.gov

400 Maryland Ave. SW

Washington, DC 20202

Dear Hayley Sanon,

As the Superintendent of the San Pasqual Union School District, I am writing to strongly advocate for the continuation of funding for the San Diego County Office of Education's Mental Health Service Pathways (MHSP) program through the full grant period. Across our district, the impact of this initiative has been both measurable and deeply meaningful for students, families, and staff.

The addition of social work interns through MHSP has significantly strengthened our capacity to address students' growing mental health needs. Since the implementation of MHSP, we have seen clear and encouraging outcomes, including:

- Direct mental health support provided for students experiencing anxiety, grief, trauma, and behavioral difficulties.
- Critical expertise in trauma-informed practices and crisis response shared with school teams.
- Increased connections with community-based mental health services.

These are not just program outcomes—these are vital services for children in our district whose well-being, engagement, and learning outcomes have measurably improved.

Discontinuing funding before the full grant period would disrupt vital services at a time when our students need them most. I urge you to allow the program to continue as planned so we can fully realize its potential and continue evaluating its long-term impact.

Thank you for your time, consideration, and continued investment in student mental health.

Sincerely,

Mark Burroughs, Superintendent
San Pasqual Union School District

May 9, 2025

Hayley Sanon
Acting Assistant Secretary for Elementary and Secondary Education
Office of Elementary and Secondary Education
U.S. Department of Education
OESEGrants@ed.gov
400 Maryland Ave. SW

Dear Hayley Sanon,

As the school social work intern placed at Sycamore Canyon Elementary through the San Diego County Office of Education's (SDCOE) Mental Health Service Pathways (MHSP) program, I am writing to share the tremendous impact this program has had on the students in our school community.

Since beginning my placement, I've had the opportunity to work closely with students, staff, and families to support mental health and well-being. Through services such as individual check-ins, peer support groups, and classroom-based social-emotional learning activities, I have seen meaningful progress in students' emotional regulation, peer relationships, attendance, and academic engagement. These supports have made a profound difference for individual students and have positively impacted the overall school climate.

I am deeply concerned about the recent decision to discontinue funding for the SDCOE MHSP program. The need for accessible, school-based mental health support is urgent, and MHSP fills a critical gap in services - especially for students who might not otherwise receive help. Before this program, many students struggling with mental health challenges had limited or no access to dedicated support during the school day.

As an intern, I've seen firsthand how much students rely on these services to feel safe, supported, and understood. I've also heard from parents and school staff who have expressed gratitude for the program and the positive changes it's brought to children's lives.

I respectfully urge you to reconsider the decision to end funding for MHSP and allow the program to complete its full term. The mental health needs of students continue to grow, and programs like MHSP are essential to ensuring that all children have the support they need to thrive in school and beyond.

Sincerely,

Ariana Villafaña
School Social Work Intern, MHSP
Sycamore Canyon Elementary

May 20, 2025

Hayley Sanon
Acting Assistant Secretary for Elementary and Secondary Education
Office of Elementary and Secondary Education
U.S. Department of Education
OESEGrants@ed.gov
400 Maryland Ave. SW

Dear Hayley Sanon,

As the school social work intern placed at High Tech Middle and High Tech Middle Media Arts Charter Schools through the San Diego County Office of Education's (SDCOE) Mental Health Service Pathways (MHSP) program, I am writing to share the tremendous impact this program has had on the students in our school community.

Since beginning my placement, I've had the opportunity to work closely with students, staff, and families to support mental health and well-being. Through services such as individual check-ins and emotional support, peer support groups, classroom-based social-emotional learning activities, parent info-sessions and more, I have seen meaningful progress in students' emotional regulation, peer relationships, attendance, and academic engagement. These supports have made a profound difference for individual students and have positively impacted the overall school climate as well.

I am deeply concerned about the recent decision to discontinue funding for the SDCOE MHSP program. The need for accessible, school-based mental health support is evident and urgent, and MHSP fills a critical gap in services - especially for students who might not otherwise receive help. Before this program, many students struggling with mental health challenges had limited or no access to dedicated support during the school day.

The issues these students face are real and they are serious, as they have ranged from suicidal ideation, to self-harm/ cutting, to substance abuse, anxiety, depression, dissociation, and more. As an intern, I've seen firsthand how much students rely on these services to feel safe, supported, and understood. Further, I've heard from parents and school staff who have expressed gratitude for the program and the positive changes it's brought to children's lives.

These services do more than just provide to our students, though, they help families, school staff, and peers as well. Parents working full-time and raising multiple children often have the added stress of trying to help their child deal with struggling mental health. This encompasses not only the energy dedicated to providing emotional support, but also the time and energy researching proper services to connect their children with in order for them to work through their challenges. Through the SDCOE MHSP program, we are able to not only provide care and support for the students on campus, but we are able to also recommend outside resources to further the help received for those students as well. These services alleviate stress on the

parents and provide a comfort, knowing their children are being cared for and supported throughout the school day.

In similar fashion, teachers have commented on the ways they feel more supported because of the program. They describe it as a burden being lifted, knowing they can turn to myself as a school social work intern to provide emotional support to students. They note how often in the past the needs of these students have unfortunately take away from their ability to teach and classmates' ability to learn. If there's anything I have taken away from this experience, it is that this program has far reaching affects, which provide support to not only students in need, but to their families, classmates, and teachers as well.

I respectfully urge you to reconsider the decision to end funding for MHSP and allow the program to complete its full term. The mental health needs of students continue to grow, and programs like MHSP are essential to ensuring that all children have the support they need to thrive in school and beyond.

Sincerely,

T.J. McAloon
School Social Work Intern, MHSP
High Tech Middle and High Tech Middle Media Arts Charter Schools

May 21, 2025

Hayley Sanon
Acting Assistant Secretary for Elementary and Secondary Education
Office of Elementary and Secondary Education
U.S. Department of Education
OESEGrants@ed.gov
400 Maryland Ave. SW

Dear Hayley Sanon,

As the school social work intern placed at Julian Union School District K-8 and Spencer Valley School District K-8 through the San Diego County Office of Education's (SDCOE) Mental Health Service Pathways (MHSP) program, I am writing to share the tremendous impact this program has had on the students in our school community.

Since beginning my placement, I've had the opportunity to work closely with students, staff, and families to support mental health and well-being. Through services such as individual check-ins, peer support groups, and classroom-based social-emotional learning activities, I have seen meaningful progress in students' emotional regulation, peer relationships, attendance, and academic engagement. These supports have made a profound difference for individual students and have positively impacted the overall school climate.

I am deeply concerned about the recent decision to discontinue funding for the SDCOE MHSP program. The need for accessible, school-based mental health support is urgent, and MHSP fills a critical gap in services - especially for students who might not otherwise receive help. Before this program, many students struggling with mental health challenges had limited or no access to dedicated support during the school day.

As an intern, I've seen firsthand how much students rely on these services to feel safe, supported, and understood. I've also heard from parents and school staff who have expressed gratitude for the program and the positive changes it's brought to children's lives.

I respectfully urge you to reconsider the decision to end funding for MHSP and allow the program to complete its full term. The mental health needs of students continue to grow, and programs like MHSP are essential to ensuring that all children have the support they need to thrive in school and beyond.

Sincerely,

Lenore Reese
School Social Work Intern, MHSP
JUESD, SVESD

May 23, 2025

Hayley Sanon
Acting Assistant Secretary for Elementary and Secondary Education
Office of Elementary and Secondary Education
U.S. Department of Education
OESEGrants@ed.gov
400 Maryland Ave. SW

Dear Hayley Sanon,

As the school social work intern at Juvenile Court Community School East County through the San Diego County Office of Education's (SDCOE) Mental Health Service Pathways (MHSP) program, I have witnessed the profound impact this initiative has had on our school community. Since starting my placement, I have worked closely with students, staff, and families to support mental health and well-being through individual check-ins, peer groups, expressive arts, a mental health club, and social-emotional learning. These supports have improved students' emotional regulation, peer relationships, attendance, and academic engagement, while also reducing student crisis and violence and enhancing the overall school climate.

By incorporating expressive arts—one of my personal strengths—into this work, I've helped students affected by trauma express themselves, regulate emotions, and begin healing. Many have experienced trauma that alters brain development and impairs emotional processing, making traditional talk therapy difficult. Creative approaches offer a vital outlet when students struggle to verbalize their experiences. Research confirms the lasting effects of trauma on brain development and underscores the need for early, sustained intervention; removing these services disregards that evidence and deprives vulnerable students of the tools they need to succeed.

The recent decision to discontinue MHSP funding is deeply concerning. This program fills a vital gap in school-based mental health services, particularly for students who might not otherwise receive support. I've seen students transform—those once disengaged from school and resistant to support have begun to thrive because of consistent, trauma-informed care. Before this program, many students struggling with mental health challenges had limited or no access to dedicated support during the school day.

I urge you to reconsider the decision and allow MHSP to continue. As student mental health needs and concerns about school violence grow, programs like this are essential to helping students succeed in their education and to become healthy, functioning members of society.

Sincerely,

Melissa A. Groves

School Social Work Intern, MHSP
Juvenile Court Community School & East County Community School